

I N N O C E N C E :

A N

ALLEGORICAL POEM.

By Miss MARY YOUNG. ¹⁸

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. EVANS, Paternoster-Row ;

And sold by T. HOOKHAM, New Bond-Street; and T. LAKE, Uxbridge.

M D C C X C,

1790

NEW YORK

MEMORIAL

BY



T O

The Rev. Dr. *BATHURST*,

Canon of CHRIST-CHURCH, in *Oxford*.

TO the Patron of the Muses, and the Friend
of Religion and Virtue, this humble attempt
may be offered without impropriety. It is not
with the consciousness of Excellence, but the
hope of Candour, that I offer it for perusal:
and the height of my ambition will be gratified,
if defects in the Poetical Composition are
excused

excused for the sake of *that design* which
produced it.

I remain, SIR, with the highest esteem,

Your obedient,

"And obliged humble Servant,

The Author.

January 23, 1790.

I N N O C E N C E :

A N

ALLEGORICAL POEM.

FAR from the wint'ry wild and desert plain,
Where ev'n the vernal show'r descends in vain;
Far from the lonely, dark, sequester'd dell,
Where the meek Hermit forms his sacred cell;—
A Scene there is, with ev'ry beauty grac'd,
Whose charms luxuriant, Winter ne'er defac'd:
There Spring eternal casts its vivid bloom,
Nor dreads the noxious mist, nor dreary gloom :

B

Soft

Soft is the breeze! a pure benignant light
 Glows o'er the landscape round, serenely bright:
 A sparkling stream o'er golden pebbles plays;
 And sportive, winds its course through flow'ry ways:
 The jocund birds, who blend their sweet employ,
 And tune their artless throats to songs of joy;
 Th' unfading blossoms, which their sweets exhale,
 And lend their fragrance to the passing gale;
 The gentle gale, whose balmy breath inspires
 Transporting tenderness and soft desires;
 The lengthen'd vista and the fragrant bow'r,
 Form'd by the pliant boughs entwining pow'r;
 And all that charms the eye, and glads the ear,
 Proclaim---That HOPE's fair gardens flourish here!

A youthful Form, with fairer beauty grac'd,
 Than e'er the cunning hand of Genius trac'd,

Adorn'd

Adorn'd this blissful spot:—his azure eye
 Beam'd with the radiance of a summer sky;
 His rosy lips a dimpling smile display'd,
 And his smooth brow the glossy ringlets shade;
 A fragrant wreath, entwin'd of lilies fair,
 With soft *congenial* beauty, flourish'd there:
 An *Ermine robe his graceful limbs became;
 'Twas *Heav'n's own gift*, and INNOCENCE his name.
 Light o'er the dewy shade, th' enamell'd lawn,
 He sprang transported, like the bounding fawn;
 And brighter where he came, the blossoms glow'd,
 And sweeter fragrance blest'd this fair abode.
 A sportive Lamb its rival gambols kept,
 And gently watch'd its Master, while he slept:

* The Ermine is a creature that has an aversion to a spot, and would sooner die than have its skin sullied.

But

But care he knew not—heedless would he run,
 Nor mark the dangers he was taught to shun:
 For courteous TRUTH had woo'd him to her cell;
 He smil'd, and lik'd the Damsel passing well;
 But deem'd her charms too much the Matron wore,
 And fyren PLEASURE seem'd to please him more.
 As swift and joyous o'er her haunts he flew,
 A fair and dangerous Phantom charm'd his view;
 Such smiles fallacious, and a form so bright,
 Had ne'er with soft allurements bless'd his sight.
 Through ev'ry shade and lawn he lightly speeds
 With eager step, but still the Fair recedes:
 In vain, alas! the *fatal* bounds appear,
 He leaps presumptuous in his wild career—
 The fleeting Phantom stops—but vain his flight,
 It melts in air, for ever from his sight.
 Ah me! how sad, how hopeless, and undone,
 Remains the wretched Youth so lightly won!

Rude

Rude is the storm! with rage resistless now
 It rends the garland from his polish'd brow!
 His graceful locks in wild disorder flow,
 And his heart shudders with the grasp of Woe.
 No more his feet shall press the verdant ground,
 But sharp entangling thorns his path confound.
 Fain would he fly—but, trembling with dismay,
 He views a meagre Phantom cross his way;
 With Raven voice it screams, and aspect stern—
 “Forbear, fond Youth!—’tis I *forbid* return!
 “Know, thou art mine,” he cries: “my hated grasp
 “Around thy heart shall seem the pois’nous asp.
 “Whoe’er, like thee, the destin’d bound exceeds,
 “Beneath my iron pow’r a victim bleeds:
 “Thy pangs, thy tears, are now my rich repast;
 “For, know,—’tis MIS’RY thou hast found at last.”

The Spectre ceas'd—then grasp'd his trembling hand;
 In vain would tim'rous Youth his pow'r withstand!
 As some meek Lamb, that wanders from the fold,
 Meets the gaunt Wolf, rapacious, fierce, and bold,
 In silent agony it yields its fate
 To cruel Vengeance, and remorseless Hate;
 So helpless INNOCENCE his Guide survey'd,
 And walk'd with MIS'RY through the doleful shade.

HIGH

HIGH on the mountain, by a neighbouring wood,
 The awful mansion of **EXPERIENCE** stood;
 A rev'rend Sage he was, and full of years,
 And e'en obdurate **TIME** his friend appears;—
 For him *alone* with partial care conveys
 The sov'reign cordial which supports his days.
 Stern was his brow; a keen and piercing light,
 Which **TRUTH** *alone* could bear with steady fight,
 Beam'd from his eye; and even imperial **GRACE**
 Adorn'd his stately air and measur'd pace.
 The gentle solace of his age was still
 The fairest of his daughters, young **GOOD-WILL**.
 Oft would she tempt him to the mountain's side,
 To be the wand'ring Youth's propitious guide.

And

And now, as gloomy shades involv'd the scene,
 She view'd fair INNOCENCE, and mark'd his mien ;
 Her awful Sire his trembling form survey'd,
 But check'd with flower step the ardent Maid.

- “ Approach, unhappy Youth,” he gently cries ;
 “ Oh turn on me thy sad desponding eyes !
 “ This aged hand, nor feeble nor subdu'd,
 “ Might lead thee o'er the rock and deserts rude :
 “ Though Fate's resistless law must check my zeal,
 “ Yet kind Instruction shall my care reveal.
 “ 'Tis mine,—from Heav'n the bright commission came,
 “ To turn thy footsteps from the paths of shame ;
 “ 'Tis mine to speak of dangers far and near,
 “ And e'en where PLEASURE smiles, to teach thee *Fear*.
 “ So shall thy youth her gay delusions shun,
 “ And safely tread where thousands are undone.”

Firm and sublime, his friendly words impart
 A deep and solemn gladness to the heart!
 The tim'rous Youth, to mild submission won,
 Receiv'd his counsel, like a dutious son;
 And much he thought:—though now in form severe,
 The genuine voice of TRUTH engag'd his ear:
 With grateful thanks his gentle heart o'erflow'd,
 But doom'd he was to leave this calm abode:
 The courteous Sage dismiss'd his blooming Guest,
 And one deep sigh his boding fears express'd.

Now o'er the Scene, beset with lurking snares,
 Spreads the wide 'Wilderness of HUMAN CARES!
 Tumultuous sounds th' affrighted ear assail,
 And sighs and murmurs mingle in the gale:—
 The stream of SORROW rolls its silent flood
 Through all the winding mazes of the wood—

Till chill'd and stagnate with th' inclement air,
 It freezes in the gulph of black DESPAIR.
 A dazzling crowd, with dextrous art convey'd
 By airy Phantoms, glided through the shade:
 The cautious Youth, by wise EXPERIENCE taught,
 Beheld them in the toils of PLEASURE caught;
 And well he knew, where flow'rets bloom'd so gay,
 The pois'nous Serpent form'd his guileful way.
 With gen'rous scorn, his eyes indignant roll'd,
 Where meagre AV'rice sunk beneath his gold:—
 A thoughtless Train, by transient lights engross'd,
 In ERROR's winding maze were quickly lost.—
 There SUICIDE pursues his dreadful aim,
 In some dark shade where COMFORT never came!
 No beams of sacred Mercy visit there,
 His choice DESTRUCTION, and his guide DESPAIR!
 A stately Form, whose hand the sceptre bore,
 Whilst crimson stain'd the gorgeous robe he wore,

An

An iron chain o'er all his captives threw,
 And helpless myriads trembled at his view;
 The heavy groan—the timid sigh profound—
 Were hush'd—submissive to the trumpet's sound:
 Here vile HYPOCRISY, and base DECEIT,
 And fawning FLATT'RY, and INJUSTICE, meet:
 Protean FALSEHOOD lends her mask to PRIDE,
 And TREASON grasps the poniard by his side,
 With wolf-ey'd SLAUGHTER:—these their chief proclaim,
 And tell the world, AMBITION is his name.
 From such a scene of guilt and dire dismay,
 The virtuous Youth, with horror, turn'd away;
 But whither should he fly? for, punctual too,
 Ev'n like his shadow, MIS'RY shall pursue!
 Injurious ENVY spreads her snakes around—
 Ah! ev'n should INNOCENCE escape a wound,
 Yet smiling TREACH'RY shall prepare a dart,
 Too sure, alas! to reach the Victim's heart!—

His

His alter'd cheek a pallid hue displays,
 Like some fair rose in which the canker preys;
 The tainted air affects his panting breath,
 "And his lip quivers with the blast of Death."

Ye bright immortal Pow'rs! who dwell above,
 And tune your glitt'ring harps to strains of Love!
 Oh, ye! whose warbling notes, sublime and clear,
 To rapture sooth the Saint's expiring ear!—
 Inspire my Muse!—Oh, raise her drooping wing!
 Damp with the dews of earth, in vain 'twould spring:
 One heav'nly spark shall all her dross refine,
 And kindle raptures for a theme divine!—
 For lo! a beaming light, whose ardent glow
 Might pierce the darkness of the shades below,
 Burst through the gloom:—a pure refulgent ray
 More keen than lightning—more serene than day!

O'er

O'er all the Scene its vivid light was cast,
 And ev'ry hideous Spectre shrunk aghast:—
 Soft on the ear delicious Music stole,
 And sooth'd to gentle peace, the tortur'd soul.
 And now, in glitt'ring armour close array'd,
 A Form celestial glided through the shade!
 An orient beam illum'd her beauteous face,
 And deck'd her charms with more than mortal grace—
 So sweetly awful!—so serenely bright
 No form terrestrial ever blest'd the sight!—
 Her sacred charge, a *bloody Cross*, she press'd,
 With holy rev'rence, to her conscious breast!
 A crystal shield, of adamantine force,
 From Foes malignant, still preserv'd her course.
 Immortal FAITH a flaming banner spread,
 And wav'd triumphant o'er her sacred head!—
 Fair blooming HOPE, and PATIENCE ever calm;
 And gentle MERCY, with her healing balm;

And GRATITUDE, with soft, yet ardent gaze,
 Who tunes her golden harp to hymns of praise ;
 Enchanting MEEKNESS, with her dove-like eye ;
 And pure DEVOTION, daughter of the Sky ;
 And glowing CHARITY, with matchless air,
 Among the fairest still *supremely* fair !—
 This comely Train, the dazzled eyes beheld,
 And each in native loveliness excell'd :—
 In decent order, and with graceful pride,
 They wait obedient on their heav'nly guide,
 RELIGION !—oh, 'twas she !—her lovely form
 Ev'n sooth'd the Genius of the angry storm :
 Disorder'd NATURE hail'd her as she pass'd,
 And her sweet accents hush'd the Northern blast !
 “ Awake ! ” she cry'd—“ Oh, INNOCENCE, awake !
 “ Revive, thou hapless Wand'rer, for my sake !
 “ From scenes of endless bliss, from joys above,
 “ I come—the messenger of PEACE and LOVE !

“ ETERNAL

- " ETERNAL GOODNESS fix'd my task below,
 " To gild with light this Wilderness of WOE ;
 " To guide the Trav'ler through perplexing ways,
 " And turn his trembling feet from ERROR'S *Maze* ;
 " The ghastly Fiends of DARKNESS to subdue,
 " And shew celestial glories to thy view!—
 " For, know!—one narrow path thy choice shall be,
 " Dark and obscure—'tis only known to *Me*.
 " Though hideous Forms thy inmost soul shall scare,
 " And all the giant crew of grim DESPAIR;
 " Though ranc'rous ENVY shall prepare a dart,
 " And SLANDER point her vengeance at thy heart;—
 " This glitt'ring Sword, which turns PRESUMPTION pale,
 " Keen from the hand of JUSTICE—shall prevail!
 " Though hungry Tigers howl, and Beasts of Prey,
 " And pois'nous Basilisks infest thy way;—
 " Ev'n in the vale of DEATH, where SILENCE dwells,
 " And HORROR glides through all her dreary cells;—
 " Oh

“ Oh fear not, tim'rous Youth!—the task be mine
 “ To guard thy weakness with an arm divine,
 “ And lead thee safely to that blifsful shore,
 “ Where conqu'ring TRUTH shall triumph and adore !”

Thus spoke the gracious Chief, nor spoke in vain—
 Her words re-eccho through the vast Domain!
 Reviving INNOCENCE her pow'r confests'd,
 And all the Hero glow'd within his breast.—
 No longer weak—he felt a potent charm
 Inspire his soul, and nerve his feeble arm;
 But MIS'RY trembled at a Foe so bright,
 And her pale form dissolv'd in endless night.



THE END.

